# WESTERN STATE ACCESS PROGRAMS

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#### BACKGROUND

- \* I hunt all western states, every year. I speak to agencies and landowners about the state access programs I hunt.
- Scarce or inaccessible public lands create issues similar to Montana. How to gain access to private land –
  - + To provide private land hunting opportunity;
  - + To improve access to public lands;
  - + To assist with game management;
  - + Offer options to landowners.

# MONTANA VERSUS OTHER STATES

- Payment for Access or Payment for Impacts?
- More emphasis on access to inaccessible public lands.
- Different state laws related to landowner liability for hunting access.
- \* Heavy emphasis on the landowner needs, resulting in much "Walk-in only" hunting.
- \* Big Game hunting focus; bird hunting is ancillary. Follow the money.

#### ACCESS OR IMPACTS?

- Payment for Access or Payment for Impacts?
- Hunters see it as an access program.
- \* FWP advertises and promotes BM as a public access program.
- http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/hunterAccess/blockma n/
- Charter language says it is an impact program.
- Legislative Audit report illustrates the incongruence by focusing on access concerns, while FWP reply is focused on impacts.
- What is it; What should it be; Why does it matter?

# STATES TO COMPARE

- ★ Wyoming
  - + Walk-in Hunting Areas
  - + Hunter Management Areas

× Kansas - WIHA

× Idaho - ACCESS YES!

#### WYOMING PROGRAMS

Walk-in Hunting Areas

Hunter Management Areas

#### WYOMING WIA AND HMA PROGRAMS

- + Provide access to 3,711,296 acres of private and State Trust land and many more acres of inaccessible public land.
- + In 2012 the program received \$924,800 in funding. Donations to ACCESS YES when applying for permits and purchasing licenses.
- + http://wgfd.wyo.gov/plpwhmprogram/default .aspx

# WYOMING - HUNTER ENROLLMENT

- \* HMA On-line registration. High-demand HMAs have a drawing. Print permission slip and sign that you read the ranch rules. Landowners sets the rules. Large properties.
- \* WIA On-line maps. Similar to Type 1 BM properties. Designated parking areas and "WALK-IN HUNTING ONLY."



Private Lands Public Wildlife
Access Program

#### WYOMING - WIA RULES

- \* Rules focused on landowner concerns.
- \* All maps and rules are on-line.
- Designated parking areas, with NO EXCEPTIONS.
- \* Maps by county.
- \* All properties indicate allowed species and sex of animal that can be taken.
- Emphasis on inaccessible public lands to leverage dollars expended.
- \* http://wgfd.wyo.gov/plpwhmprogram/frm walkinhuntingDetail.aspx

#### WYOMING - HMA RULES

- \* Hunters apply online for a specific area.
- \* One property per day.
- \* Must have permission slip in your vehicle.
- Maps and Ranch rules for each property are on the WGFD website.
- **×** Each ranch has a profile of enrollee.
- × Rules focused on landowner concerns.
- **×** Focus on a high quality experience.
- \* http://wgfd.wyo.gov/plpwhmprogram/frmH unterManagementHome.aspx

### KANSAS

- \* Walk-In Hunting Access Program (WIHA)
- \* 1,100,000 acres enrolled
- \* Focus on deer hunting and spring turkey hunting. Bird hunting is up to the landowner.
- \* Budget is \$3 million, inclusive of landowner payments, admin, signage, printing of atlas.
- \* Funding is 75% Pittman-Robertson, 25% hunter license dollars.

# KANSAS - WIHA PROGRAM

- All hunting is "Walk-in Only."
- Online maps and rules.
- **× Hunting Atlas** shows all properties enrolled.
- \* http://kdwpt.state.ks.us/KDWPT-Info/Locations/Hunting-Fishing-Maps-by-County/Fall-Hunting-Atlas

#### KANSAS – WALK-IN BENEFITS

- \* Eliminate weed issues.
- \* No fire concerns in dry season.
- \* Roads not destroyed in wet periods.
- × No issues with gates left open.
- Vehicles relegated to designated parking areas. Vehicles outside those areas are investigated.
- Seems to attract a hunter who exemplifies better behavior and respect for the land.

#### **IDAHO**

- **\*** ACCESS YES!
- \* Focus on access. Properties with adjacent public acreage are given priority in ranking of properties for enrollment.
- \* All information is on-line.
- Funding primarily from "SUPER HUNT" tag raffles conducted by ID F&G.
- \* http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/ifwis/huntplann er/accessyesguide.aspx

#### **IDAHO-ACCESS YES!**

- × 100 agreements enroll total 895,000 acres.
  - + 400,000 private acres
  - + 495,000 adjacent public acres
- **×** Each property has its own ranch rules.
- Some landowners require contact prior to accessing property. Some do not.

#### **SUMMARY**

- Are we paying for Access or impacts?
- Can we leverage our money by paying for access and focusing on adjacent public lands?
- \* Address landowner concerns to make it more attractive to landowners. Yet, keep consistency within the program enrollees.
- Allocate resources to the type of hunting that is in highest demand and reflective of funding sources – Big game, upland, waterfowl.

#### **SUMMARY**

- \* Utilize technology as much as possible.
  - + Online reservations and hunter information.
  - + Easier for landowners.
  - + Lower administrative costs.
  - + Consistency across all Regions.
  - + Reduce cost of multiple properties per day.
  - + Use online system for feedback, harvest information, enforcement assistance.